THE ETHNIC MINORITIES AND THEIR GRIEVANCES

Jewish element to gain a place of importance in the life of the community, which has unfortunately provoked the resentment and jealousy of their Christian co-nationals and created a Jewish problem in Rumania. To counteract their economic influence they were refused political rights by the Rumanian Constitution of 1866, and though the Congress of Berlin obtained the abolition of this law, such obstacles were placed in the way of Jews wishing to acquire naturalization that only a few hundreds succeeded in obtaining this privilege by 1914. According to the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities which Rumania finally signed, the Rumanian nationality is conferred on all Jews in Rumania. The Jews have not followed the example of the Magyars and Germans, who have created political parties of their own, yet prejudice against them is pretty strong and has led to the formation of political groups which are purely anti-Semitic. The supporters of anti-Semitism are mainly recruited among students, and the universities have often been the scenes of ruthless and barbarous acts of violence. The leaders of the anti-Semitic leagues are unscrupulous individuals, who by pandering to the lowest instincts of the mob see a way to secure personal advantages for themselves. Thus the chief henchman of Cuza, the anti-Semitic leader, an individual named Codreanu, gained notoriety by shooting the Police Prefect of Jassi while the latter was doing his duty in suppressing a pogrom that had been organized in the capital of Moldavia.

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The Jewish problem is purely economic, and this is the reason why student circles are so anxious to impose the "numerus clausus" in the Rumanian universities. They wish to eliminate potential rivals in the liberal professions as far as they possibly can. In many of these the Jewish element has certainly distinguished itself, especially in law and in medicine. Rumanian youth feels that the prominent position Jews hold in society is a serious obstacle to its advancement, and the methods adopted to eliminate this hindrance are certainly not always commendable. It should be added, however, that where Jews do not exist other races occupy their place, so that it is always the non-Rumanian elements which fill the more lucrative posts in the urban

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554 563 districts. Thus in the Banat, and Transylvania, the Germans and Magyars dominate commerce and industry and Magyar influence has been so powerful that it has practically assimilated the Jews. In the lower Danubian ports and at Constantsa, it is the Greeks and Armenians who form the largest section of the commercial community, though in certain Danubian ports the Jewish element predominates.

461 These facts would tend unequivocally to show that the Rumanians do not possess the necessary perseverance that is indispensable for those who desire to engage in commerce. It would appear, too, that the French educational system which they have adopted helps to foster a contempt for all occupations which are not purely intellectual, and for these reasons Rumanians who claim to have received some degree of education look askance on all manual work. This apparent aversion for commerce explains to a certain extent the absence of a Rumanian middle class, an absence which ought to be remedied, for the country is deprived of a useful steadying element which is indispensable for its normal development. As things are, it possesses a small superficial leading class, that cannot be said to compensate by its quality for its lack of quantity, and a huge mass of almost illiterate peasants that lags far behind. The example of Russia proves the danger that exists for a community which shows such an unstable equilibrium of classes. A solution of the problem would consist in attracting the Jews from the occupations to which they have hitherto been restricted. The Jewish problem in Russia has been solved by adapting the Jews to industry and agriculture. An exceedingly instructive and interesting article entitled "Soviet Russia solves the Jewish Problem," from the pen of Mr Wm. Zukerman, and published in the "Contemporary Review" for Dec., 1931, may well supply useful hints for Rumania. There is no doubt that if the Jews in Rumania enjoyed greater freedom of action they would not concentrate all their activities on commerce, and they would thereby offer to Rumanians more possibilities and better opportunities to engage in trade than they now possess.

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